# The High Country Association of REALTORS® GAZETTE

Issue 10-06 Summer 2010

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT…HOPE HARVEY

Greetings High Country REALTORS®!

I hope this finds you all well and enjoying the beauty of our North Carolina mountains this summer! I am pleased to have some exciting news about how your High Country Association of REALTORS® is helping you in these difficult times for those in the real estate profession.

The Advertising Committee interviewed several marketing firms and early this spring, they brought your Board of Directors a recommendation to enter into an agreement with Green Lion International to promote our Association. The Committee had already secured advertising on nine popular web cams both locally and in several areas across Western North Carolina. In addition, they worked with Our State magazine on the ad in the July issue out now and will continue to run season appropriate ads in this popular publication for the next year.

What Green Lion brings to our association is the ability to promote our area professionally and push potential buyers up the mountain to our members from key target markets. The survey this past winter told us potential customers are coming from our backyard in Charlotte, Raleigh and the Piedmont area as well as South Florida. The first step is a complete redesign of the web site and you will see exciting changes at www.highcountryrealtor.org before the end of July!

The next step will be getting our web address advertised in those key markets and selling a lifestyle on this mountain that will send potential buyers in our direction. You asked us for assistance in getting people to your door and that is exactly what we are doing with this ad campaign. We are all fortunate to be members of a REALTOR® organization in a position to assist their members on a level of this magnitude.

Finally, our successful Official High Country REALTOR® Magazine is in over 200 markets across our area and starting in July, we are headed down the mountain towards Charlotte for additional distribution. The Publications Committee has done a great job with this member benefit and they hope to continue expanding our distribution area towards Raleigh within the coming year.

Once advertising and marketing efforts are in place and the potential buyers are on our mountain, it is all up to you, the REALTOR® professional. I encourage and expect you to treat each and every client with the respect, dedication and diligence that you yourself expect when searching for a purchase of any size. Let's all work together to make sure our efforts are a success for all members. I wish each of you the best this summer as we show everyone that our area is the place to be and

This Is High Country!!

Sincerely,
**Hope Harvey**
**President, High Country Association of REALTORS®**

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## Information from the NC Association of REALTORS®

The Real Estate Commission has revised the Residential Property Disclosure Statement, effective July 1, 2010. The changes are as follows:

- The word "Military" has been added in question #15 so that the revised version of the question will read: "COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, OR MILITARY NOISE, ODOR, SMOKE, ETC. AFFECTING THE PROPERTY?"
- The following statement has been added immediately above the Owner and Purchaser Initials and Date lines at the end of the second page: "In lieu of providing a written explanation, you may attach a written report to this Disclosure Statement by a public agency, engineer, land surveyor, geologist, pest control operator, contractor, home inspector or other expert, dealing with matters within the scope of that public agency's functions or the expert's license or expertise."

**Any buyer who makes an offer on a property on or after July 1st should receive the new Disclosure Statement prior to making the offer. If they don't, they will have the right to terminate any resulting contract for three days following the effective date of the contract or three days from receipt of the new version of the Statement, whichever occurs first. With regard to a property listed before July 1, 2010, unless the property is already under contract on July 1st, the seller should complete a new Disclosure Statement**. The Residential Property Disclosure Act requires a real estate agent to inform a client of their rights and obligations under the Disclosure Act. Listing agents should contact their seller clients and inform them of the need to complete a new Disclosure Statement, and agents representing buyers should advise their clients of their right to get copies of the new Statement.

A copy of the new Disclosure Statement was provided by the Commission to NCAR on June 23rd. A PDF version of the Statement is available in the "Forms and Contracts" section of the NCAR website. (To access this form, login to NC REALTORS® website at www.ncrealtors.org. Once you've logged in, click on 'Forms and Contracts' in the upper left hand corner. Click on the blue 'Forms & Contracts Library' icon. The form can be found in the 'Forms & Contracts Library.')

The revised Statement has also been forwarded to NCAR's approved forms software vendors and should be updated within the next two weeks.

# WHY USE A REALTOR®

With today's technology at your fingertips one question that keeps coming up to REALTORS® is "why use a REALTOR® when you can sell the house yourself?"

**Talk to help answer that question.**

**1.** The consuming public still believes the myth that advertising actual sells their individual home, and it really does not. This has always been the case. Before Internet advertising (and advertising is advertising), only one out of 60 buyers actually bought the home they called on in an ad. The margin is probably smaller today because Internet advertising allows the consumer to see more homes quicker, but I would bet the principle remains. In fact, does anyone have a reliable statistic on how many internet buyers actually buy the home they found on the internet and inquired about? The reality, I believe, is that they still connect with a real estate agent who finds the home of their choice for them in the majority of cases. 80% of buyers may start on the Internet, but 90% still use a REALTOR® to find their home. Buyers still pick the home while standing in the living room and placing their furniture, not by looking at the most high-def virtual tour every made. This means that REALTORS® still have the majority of the buyers, and a seller would be extremely wise to list with an agent who knows how to cooperate with those agents and expose the listing to the customers of those agents, which still represent the bulk of potential customers. That agent will also know how to present the home, both using technology and in person, to make it as appealing as possible to the consumer.

**2.** Since the vast majority of residential properties that are sold across America are listed by one agent and sold by another, a seller would be wise to have an agent who has listed the property and is working with the seller's interests in mind.

**3.** A good listing agent will not only 'splash' the listing across the Internet indiscriminately, but will know how to manage customer's, track responses, and practice good Customer Relationship Management, probably using professional CRM software, to make the most of every buyer inquiry.

**4.** There are a multitude of AVM sites that claim to price a home, and many are able to ballpark it. But pricing is an art and requires a level of skill and experience, especially in the local marketplace even more important is the management of the pricing as time goes on in the marketing process. Relying on a broad automatic algorithm to price your most valuable asset is, for most homeowners, a major risk.

**5.** A good buyer's agent is a professional negotiator. A wise seller would have a good listing agent to negotiate in return. There are a few websites that are popping up that claim to make this possible directly between buyer and seller over a sort of social networking/email environment. However, this process is highly adversarial, and is one of the foundations of the real estate industry. If buyers and sellers could routinely negotiate without conflict, perhaps there would not be a real estate industry. Negotiating the transaction will always be done best face to face, and person to person through agents.

**6.** Real Estate as a process becomes more complex and risk-oriented every week. A good listing agent knows how to make it through the shoals and know where the rocks are, and especially the sharks. The seller may have an attorney for the legal questions and legal risk, but an attorney is not going to go 'out into the field' where the issues and problems are. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

# WHY USE A REALTOR® Cont'd

**7.** A real estate agent manages the documents, and the list of documents grows larger and larger. As good as a good attorney is, a listing agent's focus on the transaction will assist even the attorney in guarding the transaction process and ensures everyone in the transaction gets what they need. There are document creations and management websites springing up that are available to the public, but it take a professional to manage the entire document cloud. In many instances managing the documents electronically is for most people more complex, not less. In addition, electronic document management adds an important level of security and confidentiality that the real estate professional must maintain, and the 'civilian' may not be as aware of the threat and need for protection.

**8.** Perhaps the most valuable service is the reality that a transaction must be sold on average at least 3 times during the same transaction: once at the signing of the agreement, once at the cold-feet stage, and once more (or twice more) as the inevitable problems crop up. A good real estate agent helps make sure the property remains in the transaction by solving the myriad of questions, issues, emotions and problems that accompany every sale. This can only be done by a person, not a PC.

**9.** While the internet has automated the search for financing, and even the application process, someone (s) needs to oversee the process. Too many transactions still fall by the wayside because no one was watching the process, and good agents do that.

Interestingly, as I read this back to myself, I realize that while all these areas are touched by the internet and technology, they are still the services that have always been a part of the trade. Since this question seemed obviously targeted toward the impact of the internet and technology on the value of the real estate professional, let's make sure to talk about that.

**10.** Technology itself is more complex and growing evermore hectically chaotic. More sources, more devices, more websites, more services, more software, more products. If today's professional can barely keep up, how can the typical homeowner? A real estate professional, whether working with the buyer or the seller, must be able to manage the technology jungle better than the homeowner or buyer can for themselves. While all the above principles are timeless, an agent must now be technologically competent in an industry that is now technology based. Managing all the technology for the buyer and seller is the newest value added service.

**11.** The Internet is an information fire hose. The buyer and seller can get all the information they want, more even than some professionals I know. We are no longer the gatekeepers of the information, but the managers of it. Most consumers will admit they need a real estate professional to make sense of the overwhelming torrent of information they face.

Source: **John Hicks**, e-PRO
CVR MLS
Director of MLS Training and Outreach
CVR MLS Commercial Division
Certified e-PRO Trainer

# PRESS RELEASE

## Local members of Association of REALTORS® head to Raleigh

JUNE 22, 2010, BOONE, NC --- Legislators in Raleigh heard from Realtors in the High Country when members of the High Country Association of REALTORS® traveled to the state capital. President-elect Charlie Burleson, State Directors Patrick Morgan and John Volpe, and Executive Officer Laurie Phillips joined hundreds of other Realtors from across the state to talk with elected officials about issues affecting the real estate industry. The North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, which is one of the largest professional trade associations in the state – representing more than 34,000 members – organized the event.

In addition to local items, the group covered three issues of importance to real estate and supporting industries. They included: appraisal management company regulation, a ban on reconveyance fees, and no new taxes or fees on real estate and supporting industries.

" Real estate ownership and investment produces jobs and creates a solid foundation from which people build a life," said Patrick Morgan. "In addition, homeownership creates substantial social benefits. Homeowners have a vested interest in their neighborhoods and support efforts to make their communities better places to live," he continued. "The real estate sector has always been a vital component of our state's economy and heritage. Today our state's real estate industry faces several challenges and action is needed to advance homeownership and strengthen our economy."

Also while in Raleigh, Homes4NC, the housing foundation for the North Carolina Association of REALTORS®, held a press conference to kickoff the Workforce Housing certification program, which will provide education and training for Realtors to become certified workforce housing specialists, thus helping more families obtain the dream of homeownership. For more information visit www.homes4nc.org.

More information about the High County Association of Realtors may be found at www.highcountryrealtors.org. The association is composed of members in Watauga and Avery counties and the surrounding area who maintain a marketplace where buyers and sellers can safely transfer property under the guidance of a professional held to standards of excellence.

## RISING STAR RECIPIENT
## 2010
## Dara Barnes
## Action Realty

Dara has been a very active participant in our association since she became a REALTOR® in October of 2006. In 2008 the secretary for the Board of Directors had to resign due to a family emergency and Dara stepped into that position with much enthusiasm. Dara has been on the board ever since and has participated on committees and played a vital part in the Boone Chamber of Commerce 'After Hours' to celebrate our Association Name Change. She is active in her community and is always willing to volunteer her time whether it's painting or picking up trash after an outing/event. She not only volunteers but she does it with a SMILE.

**CONGRATUATIONS DARA!**

## CONGRATULATIONS!
## TO OUR 2010 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Every year the High Country Association of REALTORS® gives out four $1,000 scholarships to two students from both Avery and Watauga High Schools.
This years winners are:

Avery County
Jared Clark and Cherilyn Franklin
Watauga County
Ethan Woodring and Kyle Miller

# DID YOU KNOW?

Check out the Resources Section of Navica as it contains lots of useful tools:

- ☑ Display Builder—This enables you to define the data that will display with listings, as well as the layout of displays. There are two types of displays that can be built: Full Display & Results Display. (User Manual Page 62 )
- ☑ User Manuals—Provides access to Navica manuals providing step by step instructions on how to use the various features of each program. (User Manual Page 66) .
- ☑ Links—Provides users easy access to other websites of common interest posted by the Association (Ashe, Avery & Watauga Tax & Deed links). You can also add your own links. (User Manual Page 66)
- ☑ Financial Calculators—Provides you with various calculators to aid you in estimating the payment and loan amounts for your clients. (User Manual Page 67)
- ☑ Custom Exports– Enables you to design a custom setup so that you can select the data fields you would like to include in an export file. (User Manual Page 70)
- ☑ Navica Assistant Export - Navica Assistant (PDA Application) offers Listing Search, Contacts, Agent Roster, Financial Calculator, Property Photographs. Easy installation and user-friendly interface.
- ☑ My Navica Settings—Allows you to customize the appearance of your Home Page of Navica. (User Manual Page 71)
- ☑ Forms– Property Input forms, Zone Maps, Watauga Fire District Maps, Listing Code List, Seller-Opt-Out Form
- ☑ Navica Software– The offline version of Navica can be downloaded from here. Print the instructions first!
- ☑ Training Tutorials—Mini training tutorials are available. Choose from: Adding a Listing, CMA Search, Photo Maintenance, Document Uploading and Prospecting

## ADDING A NEW LISTING OR MAINTAINING A LISTING???

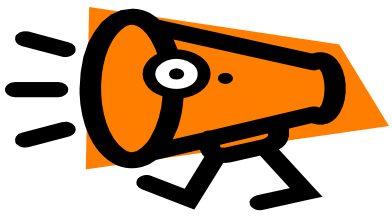
Then you may have noticed there are two additional mandatory fields. The new fields are:

1. Allow Comments (y/n)
2. Allow AVM (y/n)

AVM stands for Automated Valuation Model

This is further defined as:

a Participant's VOW may allow third-parties (1.) to write comments or reviews about particular listings or display a hyperlink to such comments or reviews in immediate conjunction with particular listings, (Allow Comments) or (2.) display an automated estimate of the market value of the listing (or hyperlink to such estimate) in immediate conjunction with the listing. (Allow AVM)



## CALLING ALL BROKERS-IN-CHARGE !

It is time for the annual office certification!

Please look for your 2010 office certification form along with completion instructions sometime around June 15.
All offices MUST certify annually no later than July 31st.

Please call the Association office if you require another form be sent to you.

## For REALTORS® eyes only:
## Exclusive rates for exclusive REALTORS®

National Association of REALTORS® is pleased to present REALTORS® Core Health Insurance (RCHI) - an affordable and guaranteed-acceptance limited medical insurance program designed exclusively for REALTORS®, their eligible dependants, and REALTOR® staff members under 65.

Members who will benefit from **REALTORS® Core Health Insurance** include those who:

- Cannot afford comprehensive health insurance
- Have comprehensive health insurance with high deductibles or out-of-pocket costs, and who need affordable coverage for everyday healthcare
- Have tried to get health insurance and have been turned down

**Highlights of the RCHI program:**

- Guaranteed-acceptance- No medical questions/exams required
- Low cost- Plans start as low as $70.69 per month
- Freedom to choose any provider
- Next day coverage (30 day waiting period for sickness)

**Benefits Include:** doctor office visits, wellness visits, emergency room benefits, surgery benefits, and more! For coverage information, no-obligation quotes, or to enroll, call a benefit specialist today at (877) CORE-PLAN, (877)267-3752, or visit www.RealtorsCoreHealthInsurance.com

Kyle Wahlgren—Executive Support and Communications- RCHI- Proud Partner in NAR's REALTOR Benefits® Program

## Welcome to Our New List Serve

Please use our new system as you did before for real estate business such as open houses, property alerts, rentals or changes along with prospecting, etc. Solicitations of members or non-members are not allowed.

This system can now accept attachments with up to 10-mega bite of information. To send a message you may click below, initiate an email message addressed to HighCountry@RealTown.com OR post a message directly on the web. To access the web portal, login to http://RealTown.com with your e-mail address and password. If you do **NOT** know your password, please go to http://RealTown.com/login and click on 'Forgot Password'. Follow the steps (use your email address) and your login information will be emailed to you promptly.

**To Post/Send Messages**: You are able to post messages by sending an e-mail addressed to HighCountry@RealTown.com OR by using the web interface. Please note that the use of the online features is optional.

* If you are sending an e-mail, pictures or flyers can only be attached to the message **only** if they have a web presence.
* Pictures or flyers can **ONLY be imbedded** in messages that are created by using the web interface. Click here for photo upload instructions.

Messages are sent out as an email **AND** are listed on the web as a discussion.

***Please realize when you reply to a message it will be released ONLY to the web interface and it will appear as a "reply" to the original message. If you want to reply directly to the individual you must use their email address which can be found on the Navica roster.

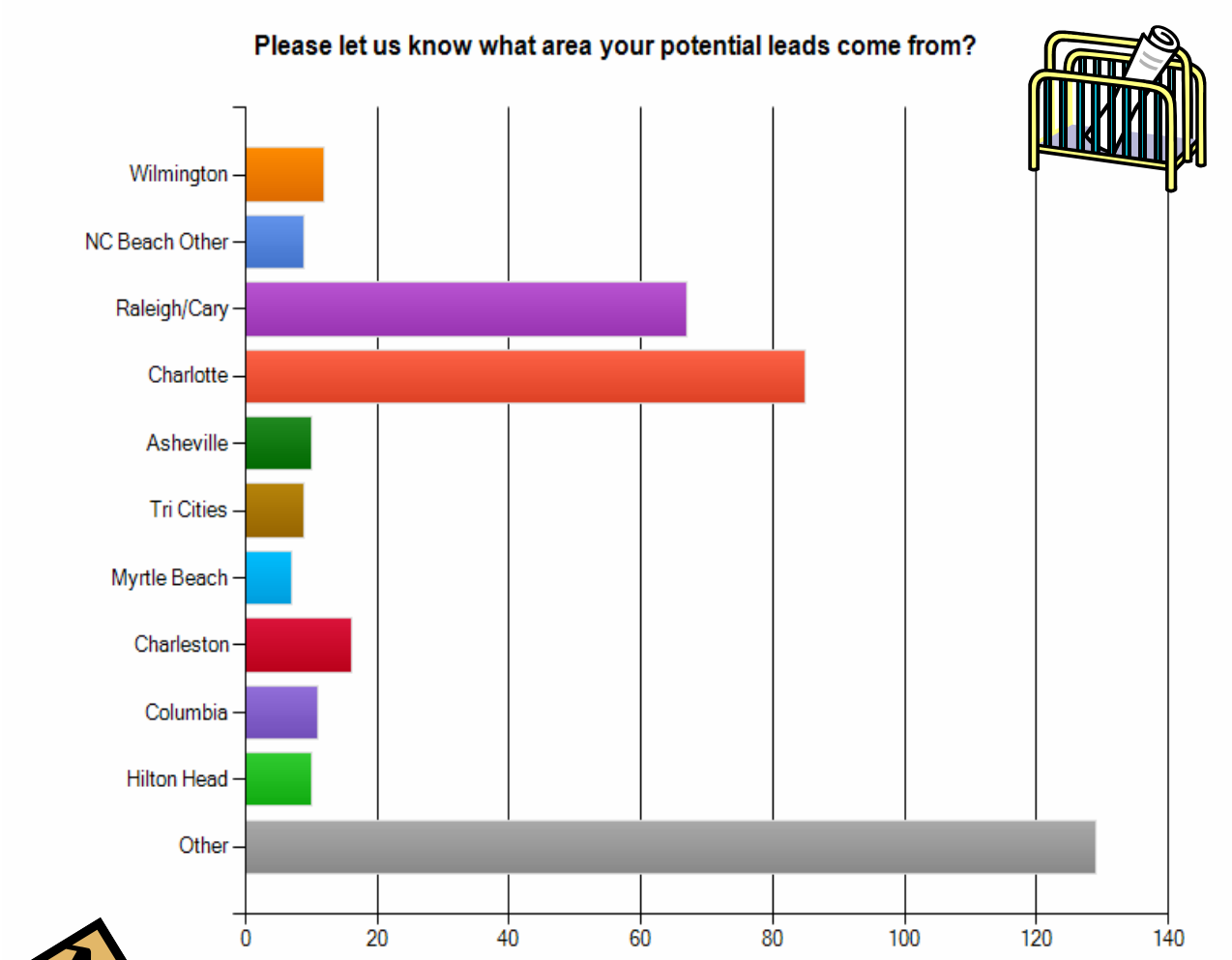
## **HOT TOPICS**

**There will be no Hot Topics in July**

**Enjoy your Summer!**

The Advertising Committee recently conducted a short survey of our membership to aide them know the direction to go with advertising.

Here are the results:




Advertising Committee Members:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Debbie Clark | Debbie@MountainRunProperties.com | 828.733.9200 |
| Carol Sommer— | c.advanced@yahoo.com | 828.264.5111 |
| Ryan Suddeth — | rsuddeth@yahoo.com | 828.406.3167 |
| Patty Page - | patty@brghomesandland.com | 828.773.3280 |

## The High Country Association of REALTORS®
### CONTACT INFORMATION

As we continue to move forward with changes **(www.HighCountryRealtors.org)** please feel free to access the **Members only** section, where you can view minutes from recent meetings, as well as stay up-to-date regarding the events of this association.

## High Country Association of REALTORS®

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**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday 9:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

**Navica can be reached at 1-800-367-8756**
**OR**
**Click on the Live Chat button to chat with tech support.**
**The advantage of this is that you can print a copy of the entire conversation for your records.**